

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A user-defined development life cycle component is part of a qualification and version control system that is an integral part of a configuration toolset in a process automation system. The user enables and defines a development life cycle to be used by defining qualification states and their attributes, including the authorized state transitions and security and requirements for each transition, such as electronic signatures. Attributes define how each control object is treated in the system. For example, a "load to controller" flag defines if the control object is loadable to a controller when it is in a particular qualification state. A fallback state defines a qualification state in which the control object continues its life cycle when it is modified and checked-back-into the system. Through a restricted state definition, the user implements the "four-eye principle" so that two consecutive state changes are made by two different users.